

VAISNAVY SK

Beneath His Bloody Love

"In the city of guns,
she was the only
bullet he couldn't
dodge."

LOVE DRIPPED IN BLOOD AND BETRAYAL

VAISNAVY SK

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One

When the Rain Fell with Secrets



The city of Mumbai shimmered under the weight of heavy rain. Streetlights blinked like dying stars, car horns echoed in the distance, and yet—right there, in the heart of chaos—**she stood still.**

Vivara.

She wasn't made to stand out. Medium-length wavy hair clung wetly to her delicate face, and her soft features were framed by an innocence the world hadn't entirely destroyed yet. She was dressed in a simple salwar, black and crimson, soaked through, and yet, her expression wasn't one of panic—but quiet ache. Her pale fingers clutched the broken umbrella like it was her last shield, trembling not from the cold, but from the hollow silence in her heart.

She was soft. Gentle. The kind of girl who would whisper apologies to the wind even when the world bruised her.

And fate, ruthless as it always was, chose that exact moment

to strike.

SCREECH. THUD.

The black Maserati skidded dangerously close on the slick road and struck her—not hard, but enough to send her tumbling onto the soaked pavement. Her body hit the ground with a gasp.

The car slammed to a halt.

The driver's door flew open.

Out stepped a man, tall and sharply cut from a different world—his presence, heavy like a storm. Rain soaked through his black suit, left open at the chest where a **silver chain** shimmered faintly against his dusky skin. **Ocean-blue eyes** burned beneath wet lashes, scanning the scene with urgency.

He didn't wait for permission. He rushed forward.

"Are you hurt?" His voice was low but carried a tension—like something precious had nearly been lost.

Vivara blinked, dazed. "I—I think I'm fine..."

He knelt beside her, reaching out, but his hand paused midway.

And then... he saw her face.

His world stopped.

Her features—those eyes, that curve of her lips—it was her. **The same face he had chased in memories, in silence, in shadows.**

"Sweetheart..." he murmured.

Not flirtation. Not a nickname.

A memory made flesh. A long-lost melody finally heard again.

Vivara stared at him, confused and wary.

He blinked, pulling back just enough. "I didn't mean to startle you. I... saw you standing there in the rain. And now this. Please, let me help. I'll take you to the hospital."

She shook her head, pushing herself up with effort. "I'm okay.

When the Rain Fell with Secrets

I just want to go.”

He didn’t stop her.

Didn’t follow.

Just **watched**—the rain falling harder now, soaking his clothes, clouding his breath, but not blurring **his gaze**. That stare stayed locked on her as she limped away, disappearing into the glowing fog of the city.

He stood still, thunder rumbling above.

Shivansh Luthra, known to most as **Vansh**, had finally found her.

But she hadn’t found him yet.

Not yet.

Two

Whisper between Two Walls



The rain hadn't stopped—not outside, and not inside her.

Vivara's clothes clung to her like a second skin, her elbow aching from the fall, but none of that compared to the burning in her chest.

Sweetheart.

She stormed into her tiny apartment, slamming the door with more force than necessary. She yanked her wet dupatta off and threw it onto the couch. "What the hell was that?" she hissed under her breath.

Who did he think he was?

Crashing into her with that stupid car, looking at her like he'd just uncovered some long-lost treasure—and then calling her Sweetheart like they were in some sort of ridiculous movie?

She paced the room, fury simmering in her veins. "Sweetheart? Really? What kind of creep calls a stranger that?"

But the memory of his voice wouldn't leave. Low. Rough around the edges. And the way his ocean-blue eyes had locked onto hers—it hadn't felt like a cheap flirt.

It felt like... recognition.

And that pissed her off even more.

"Nope. Not doing this," she muttered, grabbing a towel and furiously drying her hair. She was not going to let some random arrogant jerk with a Maserati and a silver chain get under her skin.

She wrapped herself in the towel and sat heavily on the bed, trying to push his voice out of her head:

"Are you hurt?"

"Sweetheart..."

Her chest tightened despite her anger, and she hated herself for it.

Because even furious, she couldn't shake the feeling that when he said it...

...it almost sounded like he meant it.

And that terrified her.

Underground Garage – That Same Night

"She refused the ride?" Rohan asked cautiously, walking beside him through the dim, echoing garage.

Vansh stood still, leaning against his black Maserati, rain still dripping from his tousled hair. His shirt was half open, clinging to his chiseled frame, silver chain catching the fluorescent light like a silent scream. His ocean-blue eyes weren't really here—they were still out in the rain, staring at her.

"She didn't recognize me," he said finally, voice low.

Rohan glanced sideways. "You expected her to?"

Vansh exhaled through his nose. "No. I just... hoped."

There was a rare tremble in his voice—subtle, but enough for

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Rohan to notice.

“How long have you been searching?”

“Three years,” he replied, like the number had teeth. “I looked through faces. Files. Graves.”

“And she was right there tonight...” Rohan’s voice trailed off in disbelief.

Vansh nodded once.

VIVARA !

She wasn’t supposed to appear like this. So unguarded. So unaware.

And yet, here she was.

A storm in herself, trembling from rain and something deeper.

“Should we keep eyes on her?” Rohan asked quietly.

Vansh’s jaw flexed. “Yes. Discreetly. No contact unless she’s in danger.”

“You think someone else is after her?”

“I don’t think, Rohan. I know.” His gaze sharpened. “She’s not safe. Not in this city. Not alone.”

Rohan hesitated. “And when she finds out who you are?”

Vansh went silent.

Because he wasn’t sure what scared him more—her remembering him, or continuing to forget.

He wasn’t just a stranger anymore.

He had become her shadow.

Her shield.

Her storm.

And if fate demanded it—he would become her damnation too.

But one thing was certain.

He would protect her.

Whisper between Two Walls

Even if she never forgave him for it.

Three

Shadows at Her Door



The next morning, Mumbai had traded its storm for a pale, washed-out sun.

Vivara moved through her routine like a machine—tea boiling, hair damp and messy, bruised elbow throbbing whenever she lifted her arm. But her mind? It was still stuck on him.

“Sweetheart,” she muttered under her breath, irritation spiking again. “Arrogant idiot.”

She shoved the thought aside, slipping into her sandals. She had work to get to—and a life that didn’t have room for strangers with ocean-blue eyes and silver chains.

But even as she walked the bustling streets, her eyes darted to every reflective surface. A shadow in a passing car window. Footsteps a beat too close behind her. The prickling at the back of her neck had become her unwanted companion for a week now.

She'd tried to rationalize it—maybe it was just the nerves from the accident, the lingering echo of that man's intense gaze. Yet no matter how tightly she clutched her bag or how quickly she walked, the sensation didn't fade.

Someone's tailing me, her mind whispered, and her gut believed it.

One Week Later

Inside a matte-black SUV, Rohan closed a file with a quiet snap. "We've got everything, boss. Name: Vivara. Resigned from CrownStone Enterprises two weeks ago. Lives alone in a rented apartment. No debts under her name, but..." He hesitated. "Her father's a different story. The man owes us. Heavy. Debt under your company, boss. He's been dodging payments for years—burned through loans, never cared about his own daughter. Would sell her out if the price was right."

Shivansh's jaw tightened, a flash of cold rage sparking in his ocean-blue gaze. "And her mother?"

"Left when Vivara was fifteen," Rohan continued. "Married into another family. They've got ties to CrownStone Enterprises—likely she remarried the CEO. But there's no contact between Vivara and her mother. She's completely on her own."

A muscle ticked in Shivansh's cheek. He didn't react often, but the thought of Vivara surviving in this city, unwanted by both her parents, made something dark coil tighter in his chest.

"She's careful," he finally said, voice a low rumble. "But not safe."

"Orders?" Rohan asked.

"Stay with her. Discreetly. She doesn't need to know yet."

Just then, Zayan, his second-in-command, stepped forward with another folder.

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“Boss, those guys who tried following her last week—we got their names.”

Shivansh’s gaze turned to cold steel.

“Burn everything they touch,” he said, voice calm but lethal.

Zayan nodded. No further words were needed.

Because when it came to Vivara, no one—absolutely no one—would lay a finger on her.

Except him.

Vivara

By the eighth day, she forced herself to focus on something other than the phantom footsteps behind her: her interview. Today could be a new start, a way to outrun the debts and the suffocating grip of her father’s greed.

Every rupee she earned was another wall between her and the man who called himself her father—a man who only saw her as collateral. And unknown to her, his debt had already tied her fate to the very empire she was about to walk into.

She stepped into the marbled lobby of **The Luthra Group**, smoothing her black-and-crimson kurta. The name carried weight—an empire that practically ruled Mumbai’s skyline.

Maybe this would be her chance to finally bury her past and breathe without fear.

Meanwhile, she didn’t know that the man she had been cursing under her breath all week was waiting for her at the top floor.

And this time, she couldn’t walk away.

Four

The Unexpected Second



The elevator ride felt endless.

Vivara clutched her folder so tightly her knuckles whitened. The mirrored walls reflected a version of her that looked far calmer than she felt. Inside, her pulse hammered. This job has to work. I need this.

Each floor that passed was another reminder—this was her chance to cut away from the chains her father wrapped around her life. To pay off the debt and finally breathe.

The doors slid open with a quiet ding.

She stepped out onto the top floor, greeted by an expanse of glass walls and minimalist luxury. A receptionist directed her to the CEO's office.

Vivara smoothed her dupatta, drew in a deep breath, and knocked.

A Few Minutes Earlier

Shivansh sat behind his mahogany desk, reviewing reports

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when his office phone buzzed.

"Sir," his secretary's voice came through, "a Ms. Vivara is here for her interview."

For a moment, the world stilled.

Her name rolled in his mind, sending a ripple of something uncharacteristic—an ache he hadn't allowed himself in years. He had memorized that name long ago, etched it into his nights.

"She's... here?" His voice betrayed none of the storm inside him.

"Yes, sir. Should I send her in?"

His gaze drifted to the city skyline outside his window. A slow, dangerous smile curved his lips.

"Send her."

He rose from his chair, unbuttoning the top of his black shirt, the silver chain catching the light. His ocean-blue eyes darkened, the hunter finally sighting what he had been searching for.

After all these years, Vivara had walked straight into his den.

Present

She opened the door.

And froze.

Behind the massive blackwood desk, the man stood—broad-shouldered, ocean-blue eyes glinting under the sunlight that cut through the blinds. The silver chain resting against his unbuttoned black shirt caught her gaze like a blade of memory.

Her breath hitched. No... it can't be.

It was him.

The stranger from the rain.

The man who had called her "Sweetheart" like he owned the word.

"Ms. Vivara," he greeted, his voice a quiet storm. "Please, sit."

The Unexpected Second

She forced her legs to move, sinking into the chair opposite him. Her mind reeled. What is he doing here? Why is he here?

"You..." she began, anger breaking through her shock. "You're the guy who almost ran me over."

A faint smile touched his lips. "You remember."

"Of course, I do!" she snapped. "You called me 'Sweetheart' like we're old friends or something. And now I find you—what?—sitting here as the CEO of the company I'm interviewing for?"

"Correct, Sweetheart" he said simply, unbothered by the edge in her voice. "I'm The only and only one Shivansh Luthra. CEO of this THE LUTHRA'S."

Her fingers curled tightly around the folder in her lap. Everything in her screamed to stand up and leave, yet her need for this job rooted her in place.

His gaze softened slightly, though the intensity never waned. "You need this job, don't you?"

Her lips pressed into a thin line. "Why do you care? and for your information my name is Vivara not Sweetheart", by throwing a stern look.

Vivara's Thoughts

Why does he keep looking at me like that?

The way his ocean-blue eyes pinned her made her insides twist, and she hated it. Arrogant idiot, she cursed silently. First he almost runs me over, then calls me sweetheart like some cheap line, and now—what—is he trying to play savior?

Her jaw clenched. Get a grip, Vivara. He's just another powerful man in a city crawling with them. Dangerous, untouchable. Exactly the kind of person you swore you'd stay away from.

And yet, deep inside, a part of her whispered a question she

couldn't silence: Why does it feel like he already knows me?

Vansh

He watched her fight to keep her composure, every flicker of emotion crossing her face like an open book only he could read.

"Tell me, Ms. Vivara," he said at last, his voice smooth yet edged with something that made her skin prickle, "why do you want to work here?"

Vivara swallowed, forcing her tone steady. "Because I need a fresh start... and I believe I can bring value to your company."

Vansh leaned back, studying her like a puzzle piece that had finally fallen into his hands. She had no idea her father's debts were buried in his ledgers, her life already tangled in his world.

And he wasn't about to let her slip away again.

Five

Chains of Fate



The interview was over, but the storm inside her hadn't passed.

Vivara stepped out of the CEO's office with her folder clutched to her chest, heart pounding against her ribs. Her legs carried her down the corridor, but her mind was still trapped in that room — with him.

Arrogant. Overbearing. Infuriating.

She jabbed at the elevator button, jaw tight. "Sweetheart," she hissed under her breath. "Who even calls someone that in an interview? Stupid man..."

The doors closed, reflecting her flushed, annoyed face. She hated that a stranger could make her feel so off balance. Worse, that same stranger now held the power to decide her future.

Inside the Office

Vansh leaned back in his chair, the faintest trace of a smile ghosting his lips.

"She's the one," he said quietly.

Rohan, standing nearby, glanced at him. "You're sure?"

"Positive," Vansh murmured, eyes still fixed on the door she had just walked through. "Hire her."

Rohan hesitated. "You don't want to see the other candidates?"

"No," Vansh said simply. "I want her. Position doesn't matter — keep her close."

There was no room for debate. His orders were absolute.

Vivara

By the time she reached the street, the Mumbai sun had turned harsh, beating down on the pavement. She took a shaky breath, willing the tension out of her body.

Why him? Of all people... why him?

Her phone buzzed — a message from an unknown number.

Congratulations, Ms. Vivara. You've been selected. Welcome to The Luthra Group.

She stared at the screen, heart skipping a beat. Relief should have washed over her. Instead, unease settled deeper in her chest.

Because somewhere deep down, she knew — this job wasn't just a new chapter.

It was a chain.

And she had just clasped it around her own wrist.

Later That Evening

When she opened the door to her apartment, her heart sank. He was there.

Her father lounged on her worn-out sofa, the stale smell of alcohol clinging to him. His eyes, bloodshot and cold, snapped to her the moment she stepped inside.

"You got money?" he demanded without preamble.

Chains of Fate

Vivara tightened her grip on her bag. “No... I—I just joined a new job. Tomorrow’s my first day. I’ll get my salary next month.”

His face twisted with anger. In two long strides, he closed the distance and slapped her, the force making her stumble back against the wall.

“Useless girl!” he spat. “You think I can wait that long? You owe me for raising you, you hear me?”

Her breath caught, the sting on her cheek burning more than the words. She slipped past him, heart hammering, and slammed her bedroom door shut, sliding down against it.

For a long time, she just sat there, trembling, tears blurring her vision.

Then, slowly, she wiped her face. She wouldn’t let him see her break.

Vivara rose, pulled out her neatly folded clothes for tomorrow, and began preparing for her first day at The Luthra Group. Her fingers shook as she set her alarm, but her resolve hardened.

Tomorrow had to be better.

It had to.

Six

First Day under His Shadows



The morning light felt almost cruel in its cheerfulness. Vivara stood in front of her mirror, smoothing the creases out of her black-and-cream kurta. Concealer barely hid the faint redness on her cheek where her father's slap had landed. She told herself it didn't matter. Today wasn't about him. Today was about proving herself.

She grabbed her bag, locked her apartment, and headed into the Mumbai traffic. Each honking horn and swarming rickshaw felt like a reminder to breathe, to keep moving. New day. New start.

At The Luthra Group

The building's mirrored glass stretched toward the sky, intimidating even in daylight. Vivara clutched her appointment letter, swallowing her nerves as she stepped inside. The lobby buzzed with activity — employees in sharp suits, assistants darting between elevators, and the subtle hum of wealth and

power in the air.

At the reception, she gave her name. “Ms. Vivara? You’re expected. Welcome aboard,” the woman said with a polite smile, handing her an ID card.

Vivara exhaled slowly, willing herself to calm. You can do this. Just stay invisible.

But the moment she stepped into the elevator, she felt it — that prickle at the back of her neck. Like eyes on her.

New Faces

Her assigned workspace was on the 14th floor — a small, open-plan office with neatly arranged desks. A young man with an easy smile approached first.

“Hey, new face,” he said, offering his hand. “I’m Rudraksh, but everyone just calls me Rudra. You must be Vivara, right? Welcome to the madhouse.”

His friendliness melted some of her tension. “Thanks... Vivara works fine.”

“Come on, I’ll introduce you to everyone.” Rudra led her toward a bright-eyed woman waving at them.

“This is Meera,” Rudra said. “She’ll probably be your lifeline around here. Knows everything about everyone.”

Meera grinned. “Don’t listen to him. I’m just good with names. And coffee. Welcome aboard, Vivara!”

For the first time that day, Vivara felt her lips curve into a tentative smile. Maybe this place wouldn’t be so bad after all.

A sharp click of heels cut through her thoughts. A tall woman in a crimson blazer approached, her perfectly arched brow lifting as she took in Vivara.

“Mahira Singhania,” Rudra murmured, almost as a warning.

Mahira’s lips curved into a smile that didn’t quite reach her eyes. “So you’re the new recruit.” Her gaze swept over Vivara,

appraising and dismissive all at once. "Welcome to The Luthra Group."

"Thank you," Vivara said quietly, sensing the undercurrent in her tone.

As Mahira turned away, Vivara caught the way her gaze softened toward the executive corridor.

Rudra leaned in. "Careful with her. Mahira's... well, she has a thing for Mr. Luthra."

Vivara's stomach knotted, though she couldn't explain why.

The Summons

In the executive suite, Vansh leaned against his desk, his ocean-blue eyes fixed on the live feed of the 12th floor.

"Call her up," he said, voice smooth and unreadable.

Moments later, Vivara was ushered into his office.

He stood by the window, city skyline sprawling behind him. "First day going well?"

She swallowed. "Y-yes. Thank you."

"I like to keep an eye on the people I bring into my company," he said, gaze steady.

Her heart skipped. An eye? Is that what this is?

After a moment, he nodded. "You may go, Ms.Vivara. We'll talk soon."

The Report

Later that afternoon, Zayan placed a file on Vansh's desk.

"Boss, about Vivara... there was an incident last night. Her father showed up at her place demanding money. It got physical."

Vansh's jaw tightened, his voice dropping into a lethal calm. "Make sure he never gets within ten feet of her again. If he tries, he disappears. Quietly."

"Yes, boss."

“Call her up. Tell her she needs to sign some HR documents.”

Second Meeting

Vivara signed the papers, confused when her phone buzzed.

Salary Credit + Joining Bonus.

Her brows furrowed. “Sir, this is... too much.”

“It’s your signing bonus,” Vansh said evenly. “Welcome to The Luthra Group.”

“I can’t accept this.” She quickly transferred the excess funds back.

“I’m not here only for money, Mr. Luthra,” she said quietly, meeting his gaze. “I can do something worthwhile for this company’s reputation. Please don’t treat me like someone you have to buy.”

A glint of something unreadable flickered in his eyes. “Noted,” he said softly. “You may go.”

The Rivalry Begins

When Vivara returned to her desk, the room buzzed with unspoken questions.

Mahira’s eyes narrowed, her smile razor-sharp. “Someone’s already getting special treatment,” she said sweetly.

Vivara ignored her, sinking into her chair.

Meera leaned in and whispered, “Don’t mind her. Mahira thinks she owns this place... and maybe Mr. Luthra too.”

Across the office, Mahira’s pen dug into the paper, a cold smile curving her lips.

Twice in one day... Let’s see how long you can keep his attention, sweetheart.

Seven

Shattered Chains



For the first time in years, Vivara felt like her life was inching toward stability.

The past few weeks at The Luthra Group had been a rare stretch of peace—early mornings filled with routine, laughter shared with Rudra and Meera, and a silent rivalry simmering under Mahira's constant glares.

With Vansh away on business, the invisible weight of his gaze no longer pressed down on her. She could focus on her work, lose herself in spreadsheets and deadlines, and quietly chip away at the mountain of her father's debts, rupee by rupee.

For the first time in a long while, Vivara let herself believe she might finally be free.

The Knock

Friday evening, she unlocked her apartment door, exhaustion pulling at her shoulders. The moment she stepped inside, the stale stench of alcohol clung to the air, sour and heavy.

Her father sat slouched on the couch, his eyes bloodshot and greedy. That look alone made her stomach tighten.

"Pack your things," he said, tone sharp and flat. "You're getting married."

Vivara froze, her bag slipping from her hand. "What?"

"To Mr. Sharma. He lent me a heavy sum last year, and I can't pay it back. He's agreed to clear the debt if you marry him. The engagement's in two weeks."

Her breath caught. "You... you sold me?"

A bitter laugh scraped his throat. "Sold? I'm securing your future. Sharma's a wealthy man. You'll do as I say."

"No." The word tore out of her before she could stop it. "I won't marry him."

The slap came hard and fast, making her head snap sideways.

"You think you have a choice?" he roared. "I raised you. I own you. Tomorrow, we meet him to finalize it. You will not embarrass me."

The Breaking Point

When the door slammed shut behind him, Vivara crumpled against the wall, her cheek throbbing, her breath ragged with silent sobs. Her whole body trembled as if it couldn't contain the weight pressing down on her.

Her gaze landed on her Luthra Group ID card on the table—the one thing that felt truly hers, a fragile thread tying her to the life she was trying to build.

I can't go through with this. Not again.

And without a flicker of hesitation, her mind went to him—Vansh.

Not even a second of thought, not a shred of doubt. Just his face, those piercing ocean-blue eyes, and the bone-deep certainty that if anyone could drag her out of this suffocating

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nightmare, it was him.

Her lips moved soundlessly, a desperate plea escaping into the empty room:

Vansh... please.

Eight

A Bullet of Miracle



Vivara had run out of choices.

She had begged. She had fought. She had tried to reason, to escape, to cling to the scraps of a life that wasn't hers to barter. None of it mattered. Her father's debts were a chain around her neck, and he had tightened it until she couldn't breathe.

One evening, they came for her.

A black van. Rough hands. A rag over her mouth.

When the dizziness cleared, she was in a sprawling villa far from Mumbai's chaos. The scent of fresh flowers mingled with gun oil and expensive perfume. Around her, wedding preparations unfolded like a grotesque celebration. Gold-draped chairs. A mandap adorned with marigolds. Guests murmuring like vultures circling their prey.

She tried to run. Every door was locked, every window barred. Her father's shadow loomed at every turn, his threats

colder than the steel of the knife he pressed into her trembling palm.

“You’ll marry him,” he hissed, “or I’ll make sure you regret being born.”

The Breaking Point

Vivara’s fingers hovered over the knife when the thought came—the promise.

Her little brother’s laugh flashed in her mind, the one she had sworn to protect before the accident took him away. She had promised him she’d survive. She’d live enough for the both of them.

So she broke instead. Silent sobs tore through her as she sank onto the bridal seat, helplessly watching her fate being written.

The Wedding

They dragged her to the stage, the priest’s chants droning like a death knell. Her heartbeat thundered in her ears, her vision swimming with tears. Every breath felt borrowed.

One miracle, she thought, clinging to the sliver of faith that hadn’t yet died.

Just one.

The priest raised his voice, beckoning the groom forward. Vivara’s blurred gaze fell to the sacred fire. She didn’t feel the heat. She didn’t feel anything anymore.

And then—

BANG.

The wedding hall erupted in chaos. Wood splintered, garlands fell, and a fiery bullet buried itself in the mandap’s carved pillar, inches from the priest’s face.

The Miracle

The heavy doors crashed open, and in strode Shivansh Luthra, ocean-blue eyes glinting like tempered steel under

A Bullet of Miracle

the chandeliers. His black suit clung to him like armor, silver chain catching the firelight. Behind him, his bodyguards fanned out, weapons drawn, their presence swallowing the hall in a suffocating wave of power.

Vivara's knees wobbled as he advanced toward her, each step radiating calm, unstoppable fury. The room blurred—the terrified groom, the gasping guests, her father shrinking into a corner.

“Don’t worry,” Vansh’s voice cut through the chaos, deep and steady, meant for her alone. “You’re safe now, sweetheart.”

Her breath hitched. Relief, overwhelming and dizzying, swept through her—so intense her body gave in. The world tilted, her vision went black, and she collapsed into him.

Vansh caught her effortlessly, pulling her into his arms, bridal style. The weight of her soaked bridal attire pressed against him, fragile yet unbearably precious.

“Clear the place,” he ordered, his tone like a blade. His men obeyed instantly, neutralizing threats and silencing protests.

Without a backward glance, Vansh carried Vivara out of the villa, her head resting against his chest, his grip tightening as if daring the world to try and take her from him again.

Nine

In the Arms of the Storm



The drive back to the Luthra' Mansion was silent, save for the hum of the engine and the rhythmic pounding of Vansh's heart against the fragile weight in his arms.

Vivara lay limp, her face pale beneath the streaks of tears, bridal ornaments askew. Every bump in the road made his jaw tighten—he hated that she had endured this, that he hadn't reached her sooner.

When they arrived, he carried her through towering wrought-iron gates into his private —an architectural masterpiece hidden deep in the outskirts of Mumbai.

The mansion itself was a blend of modern glass and timeless stone, the kind of place that whispered both power and secrecy. Inside, polished marble floors reflected crystal chandeliers, and hallways stretched like a labyrinth adorned with priceless art.

He carried her up the grand staircase, past carved oak doors, to a room prepared for her alone.

The Room

It was nothing like the cramped apartment she called home.

A spacious sanctuary bathed in soft amber light, the guest suite was dressed in hues of ivory and muted gold. Floor-to-ceiling curtains framed windows that overlooked a sprawling private garden, where moonlight bathed trimmed hedges in silver.

A king-sized bed dominated the center, dressed in silk sheets that promised comfort she'd never known. A plush cream carpet muffled every step, and delicate crystal lamps cast soft patterns across the room.

Vansh gently laid her on the bed, brushing a stray strand of hair from her tear-streaked face. For a fleeting second, the unshakable mafia don allowed himself to simply look at her—safe, breathing, his at last.

“Prepare the guest suite,” he’d ordered earlier, but now, seeing her here, it felt inadequate. This room had become her sanctuary... for now.

Awakening

It was late evening when Vivara stirred, consciousness creeping back in hesitant waves. She blinked against the soft amber glow of the chandelier, the unfamiliar ceiling above her spinning for a moment. Her body ached; her throat felt raw from crying.

Then the memories slammed back—the forced wedding, her father’s threats, the gunshot.

And him.

She pushed herself upright, panic flooding her veins. Where was she?

“Easy, Sweetheart” a voice murmured from the doorway.

She turned sharply. Vansh stood there, black suit jacket

discarded, sleeves rolled up, the silver chain at his collar glinting in the light. His ocean-blue eyes met hers, steady, unyielding.

"You're safe," he said softly, stepping closer. "No one will hurt you here, Sweetheart."

Vivara's breath caught. "Why... why are you doing this? Why go this far for me?"

For a long moment, Vansh didn't answer. He stopped just within reach, his gaze locked on hers, his voice low enough that only she could hear:

"Because I couldn't let them take you from me. Not again."

Confusion and Walls

Vivara's heart stumbled at his words. "I don't even know you," she whispered, her voice trembling. "Why do you keep calling me that—*sweetheart*? What do you want from me?"

Vansh's jaw tightened, an unreadable flicker in his eyes. "You don't need to understand that yet. Just know this—I'll protect you. Even if you hate me for it."

She searched his face, finding nothing but that same unnerving intensity. Her instincts screamed danger, yet for the first time in years, she felt an unfamiliar warmth creep into the frozen edges of her chest—safety.

"Rest, Sweetheart" Vansh said finally, turning toward the door. "You're not leaving here until I'm sure you're safe."

In the Shadows

Outside her room, Zayan approached quietly. "Boss, the debtors and her father?"

Vansh's gaze turned to ice. "Make them vanish. No noise. No traces."

Zayan nodded. "And the girl?"

Vansh's fingers brushed the cuff of his sleeve, his voice low, certain:

In the Arms of the Storm

“She stays. From now on, no one lays a finger on her.”

He glanced back at the door, where Vivara slept fitfully, unaware of the war that had been fought for her.

You’re mine to protect now, he thought. Even if you don’t remember why.

Ten

A Cage of Silk and Shadows



Vivara awoke to the soft warmth of sunlight filtering through floor-to-ceiling curtains. For a moment, she stayed still, eyes scanning the room. The air smelled faintly of sandalwood and something sharper, masculine.

This was not her apartment.

The bed beneath her was too soft, the sheets a pale ivory that whispered luxury with every shift. Polished wood furniture gleamed, and the walls were adorned with abstract art. A gilded chandelier cast delicate patterns across the marble floor.

Her heart skipped.

She sat up abruptly, clutching the quilt to her chest. *Where am I?*

Memories Flood Back

The events of the previous night came rushing back—the forced wedding, her father’s threats, the priest’s chants... and then him.

Shivansh Luthra.

The stranger with the ocean-blue eyes who had pulled her from a nightmare.

The man who had whispered, *"You're safe now, sweetheart,"* moments before she fainted.

Vivara's breath hitched. She swung her legs off the bed, her feet sinking into the thick carpet, and padded toward the door.

Confrontation

"Awake?"

Vivara turned sharply. Vansh leaned against the doorway, his black shirt unbuttoned at the collar, sleeves rolled up, and a silver chain resting against his chest. Faint bruises marred his knuckles and forearms, raw reminders of the fight he had waged to get her out. Drops of dried blood still clung near his cuff, unnoticed by him.

Her gaze lingered, conflicted—fear, unease, and an unexpected sliver of gratitude twisting inside her.

"You..." she began, her voice unsteady. "Where am I?"

"My home," he replied simply, his tone even. "You were in danger. I brought you here."

"Danger," she repeated, her brows knitting. "You can't just... take me from my life and keep me here. I'm not—"

"You think I'd let you walk back into their hands?" His voice sharpened, though it didn't rise. "They would have destroyed you."

Vivara's heart pounded. "I don't even know you," she whispered. "Why are you doing this?"

Vansh's gaze held hers, a storm contained behind a mask of composure.

"Because whether you understand it or not... you're safer with me than anywhere else."

Caged

She backed a step, shaking her head. "I want to leave."

"You can't," he said, tone calm but final. "Not until I'm sure you're safe."

Vivara stormed past him, making her way to the front of the mansion. The heavy door swung open—and she froze.

Two men in black suits stood at the gates, eyes trained on her, hands resting near their concealed holsters.

She turned back slowly, fury simmering in her chest. "I'm... trapped here?"

Vansh met her gaze steadily, unflinching. "Protected," he corrected. "There's a difference."

For Vivara, it didn't feel like one.

Frustration

She stormed back into the room, slamming the door harder than she meant to. The chandelier trembled, scattering shards of light across the marble floor.

She pressed her back against the door, chest heaving. *Protected?* That was just a sweeter word for *prisoned*.

The memory of his voice—calm, assured, that infuriating "*sweetheart*"—echoed in her mind, refusing to be silenced.

"Sweetheart..." she muttered under her breath, her irritation spiking. "Who does he think he is? Some kind of savior? Arrogant idiot."

But the image of his bruised hands wouldn't leave her mind—the raw knuckles, the faint cuts, proof of the battle he'd fought for her. Against her will, something tight in her chest loosened for half a heartbeat, only to be replaced by anger.

"I don't owe him anything," she told herself firmly, pacing the length of the room. "I didn't ask for this... for him."

Yet her heart, traitorous and loud, kept replaying the moment

she had fallen into his arms, the warmth of his hold before darkness took her.

A Rare Moment

That night, when the mansion fell silent, Vivara couldn't sleep.
I can't stay here... I have to find a way out.

She slipped out of bed, careful not to make a sound, her bare feet barely whispering against the plush carpet. The hallway beyond was dimly lit, lined with abstract paintings and ornate mirrors that reflected her hesitant figure.

Her gaze darted between closed doors as she made her way toward what she thought was the exit.

But voices made her stop.

She followed the sound until it led her to a room with the door ajar. Slowly, she peeked inside.

Vansh sat alone in a leather chair, a glass of whiskey untouched at his side. The room was bathed in a warm amber glow, casting deep shadows across his sharp features.

He rolled the sleeves of his black shirt higher, revealing bruised knuckles and deep scratches along his forearms. A medical kit lay open on the table, a half-used bandage dangling from his fingers.

For a fleeting moment, his face softened, unguarded—something like exhaustion etched into his ocean-blue eyes.

Retreat

Vivara took a step back, heart pounding, suddenly overwhelmed by an emotion she couldn't name.

Why does he look like he's the one carrying the weight of the world?

She turned, hurrying back to her room before he could notice. Closing the door, she pressed her back against it, her breath shaky.

The image of Vansh's bruised hands lingered stubbornly in

Beneath His Bloody Love

her mind, stirring something dangerous in her chest.

Curling up on the bed, she whispered to herself, “I’m not staying here. I can’t...”

But long after, even when sleep finally claimed her, the echo of his quiet pain remained.

Eleven

Forbidden Paths



The next morning, Vivara buried her emotions beneath the routine of work. Concealer dulled the redness in her eyes, and a practiced smile carried her through the day at The Luthra Group.

Meera, ever the mood-lifter, leaned against Vivara's desk just before lunch.

"We're going out this weekend. No excuses. Rudra's in. You're in."

Vivara hesitated, caught between the heaviness in her chest and the need to breathe outside the suffocating mansion. "... Alright," she said at last.

Weekend Outing

Saturday arrived with a breeze of unfamiliar freedom. Dressed in a soft peach top and jeans, Vivara met Meera and Rudra at a bustling café near Mumbai's waterfront.

Meera, a whirlwind of energy, dragged them from food

stalls to arcades, laughing at her own jokes. Rudra, steady and easygoing, stayed close to Vivara, shielding her from Mahira's occasional texts and barbed comments that tried to follow her even outside work.

For the first time in weeks, Vivara felt... lighter. The weight of debts, betrayals, and unspoken proposals loosened its grip.

A Quiet Moment

As the sun dipped behind the skyline, painting the horizon in fiery orange and violet, Meera dashed off to grab snacks, leaving Rudra and Vivara alone by the railing.

Sea breeze tangled her hair, and she tucked a strand behind her ear, heart thudding too loud in her chest.

"Thanks," she murmured. "For... always looking out for me. At work. With Mahira. Everything."

Rudra's smile was warm, unguarded. "It's nothing. You deserve better than what you've been through."

Vivara's lips parted, words teetering on the edge—Should I tell him? Her heart tripped over the thought, a fragile spark of something she hadn't felt in a long time.

Claimed

Her phone buzzed.

One word lit up the screen: **Vansh.**

Blood drained from her face. She didn't need to see the sender. Her breath caught—Vansh.

Her thumb trembled over the screen. The message was simple:

"Go home. Now."

The world around her dimmed, the easy laughter and warmth replaced by a hollow pull deep in her chest. Rudra noticed the shift in her expression.

"Everything okay?"

Forbidden Paths

Vivara forced a smile, pocketing the phone. “Yeah... yeah, I just—need to leave early.”

That night, lying awake, her heart warred with itself.

Rudra was safety. Vansh was danger.

Yet not for a single moment could she ignore the truth: when her world trembled, her thoughts ran to Vansh—without a second’s hesitation.

Twelve

Shadows of Love and War



Vivara's pulse quickened as Vansh stood before her, the message that dragged her from her evening still burning on her phone.

"Why can't I?" she demanded, voice sharp. "Why can't I go out with my friends like everyone else? Why are you always in my shadow, deciding what I can and can't do?"

"Because it's not safe," Vansh's tone was calm but edged with iron. "You don't understand the people who want to hurt you."

"And you think you get to make that choice for me?" she snapped. "You're not my keeper, Vansh. I'm not yours to command!"

His gaze softened for the briefest moment. "I love you, sweetheart."

The words hit like a blow to her chest. Her breath caught—but the anger came faster.

"I hate you," she hissed, her voice cracking before rising in a

yell. "I hate you the most in this world!"

Her words tore through the room like shattered glass. Vansh stood silent, unreadable, as she stormed out.

Moonlit Shadows

The park was quiet, the moon a dull smear of silver in the Mumbai sky. Vivara sat on a cold bench, hugging herself. Each breath trembled with the remnants of rage and something deeper—something that frightened her more than Vansh ever could.

A coarse laugh broke the silence.

A group of drunken men staggered toward her, their voices thick with malice. "What's a pretty thing like you doing here alone?" one slurred.

Vivara backed away, heart pounding, until her back hit the iron railing.

The Storm Arrives

"Get away from her."

The voice cut through the night like a blade. Vansh stood at the edge of the clearing, his ocean-blue eyes burning beneath the dim light.

The men laughed—until the first one hit the ground, blood spraying as Vansh's fist connected.

He fought like a man possessed—every blow sharp, controlled, devastating. Knuckles split, blood trailing down his arm, but he didn't slow. Not for a second.

Even when the others fled, the fury in him hadn't ebbed.

His bodyguards arrived too late, finding him standing over the last unconscious man, chest heaving.

Ruthless Claim

Vivara trembled as Vansh turned to her, his face carved in fury and something rawer, something terrifying. Blood dripped

from his knuckles, but it wasn't the wounds that twisted his expression.

"I'm deeply hurt, sweetheart," he groaned, his voice rough with something more than pain. "Not by this—" he lifted his bruised hand—"but by your words."

Her breath hitched.

Without another word, Vansh gripped her wrist, his hold unyielding but not cruel.

"We're done playing games," he said, voice low and lethal. "Tomorrow. Our wedding."

"W-what?" she stammered, shock stealing her breath.

"I'm done watching you get hurt because of the mess your father left you in. I won't let anyone touch you. Not them. Not him. No one."

Her protests died in her throat as he dragged her back to the mansion, the metallic tang of his blood still in the air.

A Cage of Safety

A heavy door clicked shut behind her as Vansh left.

Vivara pressed her back to it, her breath shaking, eyes darting around the spacious yet suffocating guest room. Heavy curtains blocked the city lights, and the silence pressed against her like iron bars.

This isn't safety, she realized, panic coiling in her chest. This is a cage.

And tomorrow, she was expected to stand beside the man who had built it.

Thirteen

The Vows of Shadows



The morning of her wedding arrived like a thief, stealing the last fragments of her freedom.

Vivara sat by the window of the mansion's guest room, her gaze distant, fixed on the sprawling gardens below. Outside, the sky was heavy with monsoon clouds, but her chest felt heavier. Each tick of the clock dragged her closer to a destiny she had never chosen.

A knock broke the silence.

Vansh entered, his black designated kurta draped across his tall frame, the silver chain at his collar glinting in the muted light. "Come with me, sweetheart," he said, voice quieter than usual, carrying a weight she couldn't place.

Her lips parted to refuse, but something in his gaze—unyielding, magnetic—silenced her. She rose and followed him out.

The Meeting

The car pulled up before a private villa at the edge of the city. Vansh led her inside, his steps steady, his expression unreadable.

In the living room, a man turned to face them.

Vivara froze. "Rudra?"

Her voice cracked with disbelief.

Vansh's gaze shifted between them, his words measured. "Vivara... meet Rudraksh Luthra. My elder brother."

The name fell like a blade. *Rudraksh Luthra*.

She stumbled back, the betrayal hitting like a slap. "E-elder brother?"

Rudra's guilt showed plainly in his eyes. "Vivara, I—"

"You knew?" Her voice wavered between fury and heartbreak. "All this time... you knew who I worked for, and you said nothing? I trusted you, Rudra."

"Vivara, please, let me explain—"

But she was already backing away, the walls closing in, her trust shattering like fragile glass. She turned and fled before either brother could stop her.

The War of Vows

Back at the Luthra mansion, the wedding preparations were complete. The hall was lit with hundreds of golden lamps, their flames dancing like captive fireflies. Instead of a sacred fire pit, a blazing **fire ring** circled the mandap, its flames licking the air in a silent challenge—a symbolic battleground for what this union represented.

Vivara's **blood-red lehenga**, a custom creation from one of India's most sought-after designers, clung to her like a weight of molten silk. Every bead and thread felt like a chain. Her trembling hands brushed the crimson veil, her breath uneven.

Vansh waited for her at the altar, his black kurta tailored to lethal perfection, the silver chain catching the firelight. Ocean-

The Vows of Shadows

blue eyes met hers with the intensity of a man prepared to burn the world for her.

As they stepped into the ring of fire, Vivara's heart pounded like a war drum.

The seven vows were recited, but not as tradition intended—each one twisted, taken oppositely:

She vowed silently to endure him, biding her time.

He vowed to protect her, even if it meant chaining her to him.

She vowed not love, but resistance.

He vowed devotion, even in her hatred.

For Vivara, each vow was an oath of **revenge**—a quiet promise that one day she would break free and make Vansh pay for caging her life like everyone else had.

Every step around the fire deepened the battle lines between them—a war of true love and vengeance, waged without swords or words.

When the final vow was sealed, Vansh's fingers closed gently yet unyieldingly around hers. He leaned close enough for only her to hear:

“Trust me, sweetheart. Even if you hate me, I'll keep you safe.”

Vivara's tears blurred the flames.

And just like that, Vivara Arora became **Vivara Shivansh Luthra**—bound by rituals that felt more like shackles than sanctity, carrying her own vow: *if she couldn't escape this cage, she would turn it into her weapon.*

Fourteen

Chains of Silk and Fire



The Luthra mansion was silent, but the silence pressed like an invisible weight on Vivara's chest.

She stood in the bridal suite, her **blood-red lehenga** still clinging to her like the memory of a war she hadn't chosen. The seven vows she had taken circled in her mind like chains. For her, this marriage wasn't love—it was another cage.

The door creaked open.

Vansh entered, still in his black kurta, the silver chain glinting against his dusky skin. His ocean-blue eyes sought hers, filled with an unspoken intensity that unsettled her.

"This marriage..." she said, her voice trembling but steadying with each word, "isn't what I ever dreamed of. You may have your reasons, but for me... it's just debt settlement. So let's make something clear—I want no part of this beyond what's necessary. We will live as strangers. Separate rooms. And you... won't touch me."

Chains of Silk and Fire

For a moment, silence ruled.

Finally, Vansh inclined his head, his gaze unreadable. “If that’s what you want, sweetheart... I’ll respect it. For now.”

Her chest tightened at the word *sweetheart*, a whisper of a promise and a wound all at once. She turned away, ending the conversation.

That night, two doors closed in the Luthra mansion—one for him, one for her.

They were married, yet a world apart.

The Family Gathering

The next evening, the mansion’s calm shattered with the arrival of Vansh’s family. His parents greeted Vivara warmly, drawn by her quiet humility and simple grace.

But the warmth ended with **Aunt Prisha**. Her eyes swept over Vivara like a blade. “Who’s this girl?” she demanded, her tone cutting.

“She’s—” a servant began, but Prisha scoffed. “A maid, I assume. Certainly not anyone of consequence.”

Vivara swallowed hard, keeping her expression neutral.

Before Vansh could arrive, **Matriarch Devyani Luthra** made her grand entrance. At dinner, her voice struck like a gavel:

“I have decided. Vansh will be engaged to Mahira Singhania.”

The words echoed through the hall like a death sentence.

Vivara sat frozen, expressionless, her silence her only armor. Across the table, Vansh’s jaw tightened, his ocean-blue gaze flickering to her for the briefest moment before he schooled his face. Even he wouldn’t challenge his grandmother—not here, not yet.

Rudra, seated opposite, read the storm in his brother’s eyes and the pain Vivara tried to hide.

Vansh's parents, however, exchanged knowing glances. They liked Vivara—her quiet dignity, her humility, the way she seemed untouched by the hunger for power that consumed so many around them.

Behind Closed Doors

When the guests left, Vivara lingered in the empty dining hall. *Engaged... to Mahira.* The words pulsed like poison in her veins.

From the corridor's shadows, Vansh watched her, his fists tightening until the bruises on his knuckles split open. He longed to go to her, to tell her she was the only woman he had ever wanted, but her earlier words shackled him: *We will live as strangers.*

That night, two separate rooms closed again, holding two people bound by vows and chains—each restless, each sleepless.

Vivara pressed her forehead against the cold windowpane, the moonlight pale against her face. *If this is my cage,* she swore silently, *I'll learn to turn it into my weapon.*

Fifteen

Caged Flames



The night's silence was unkind.

Vivara lay awake in her own room, staring at the ornate ceiling, her thoughts tangled like a net she couldn't escape. *Engaged... to Mahira.* The words felt like shards lodged in her chest.

She told herself it shouldn't matter. After all, she hated him—**Shivansh Luthra**, the man who caged her life with chains of silk and fire. He had dragged her into a marriage she never wanted, binding her to him for debts that weren't hers.

And yet... the image of him standing beside another woman, accepting her as his fiancée, burned her from the inside.

It's normal, she told herself bitterly. Men like him always have someone else. I shouldn't care. I don't care...

But the lie tasted hollow.

The Next Day

Vivara arrived at the Luthra Group early, her mind a storm of restless thoughts. Every step through the gleaming hallways echoed the words that had haunted her all night: *Engaged... to Mahira.*

She forced herself to focus, burying her emotions under spreadsheets and reports, but her composure cracked when Mahira waltzed into the office with a triumphant smile.

“Good morning, everyone,” Mahira announced, deliberately flashing a sparkling ring that wasn’t quite an engagement ring yet. “I suppose you’ve all heard the news—Mr. Shivansh Luthra and I are soon to be engaged.”

The room erupted with congratulatory murmurs. Vivara’s heart clenched painfully, though her face remained neutral. She didn’t join in the applause; she couldn’t. Her nails dug crescents into her palm beneath the desk. *So, it’s true... soon to be engaged...*

Avoidance

That evening, she couldn’t bear the thought of returning to the mansion—*his* mansion. Instead, she volunteered for overtime, drowning herself in endless work.

The next night, and the one after, she repeated the pattern. Three days passed in the blur of sleeplessness and skipped meals. Her coworkers whispered about her sudden dedication, but no one knew the truth: she was running—from him, from the suffocating reality of her cage, and from the ache she refused to name.

By the third night, her head throbbed with exhaustion. She sat hunched over her desk, her untouched dinner tray pushed aside. Her fingers trembled on the keyboard, the numbers blurring before her eyes.

Why does it hurt this much? she thought bitterly. *I hate him. I should hate him...*

Meanwhile

In his private office, Vansh stood before the floor-to-ceiling window, his gaze fixed on the rain-slicked city below.

"She hasn't returned home for three nights," Zayan reported.

Vansh's jaw clenched, his ocean-blue eyes darkening. "Find out why. And make sure she eats."

Zayan hesitated. "Boss, about the engagement—Mahira's been parading the news everywhere. Vivara must have heard—"

"I know," Vansh cut him off, his voice low, almost dangerous. "But the engagement means nothing. She is my wife."

Rudra's Perspective

From the corner office on the fifteenth floor, Rudraksh Luthra had been watching the pattern unfold.

For three days, Vivara worked herself to the bone—eyes ringed with exhaustion, lips pressed into a line of quiet defiance. Rudra had seen this before: people running not from danger, but from themselves.

And Vansh? His brother was unraveling, though no one else could see it. Vansh's temper grew shorter with each passing day, his voice sharper, his nights spent by the window with a glass of whiskey untouched.

When Zayan informed him that Vivara had collapsed, Rudra wasn't surprised.

From the upper balcony of the office atrium, he saw Vansh rush forward and catch her before she hit the ground, his usually impassive face twisted in something close to fear.

Rudra leaned against the railing, arms folded. *Vansh... you're in deeper than you think.*

As his brother carried Vivara away in bridal style, Rudra's gaze softened. *And she... she has no idea what she's doing to you.*

Collapse

By the time the office clock struck midnight, Vivara's strength gave out. Her vision swam, and the next thing she knew, the ground tilted beneath her.

Strong arms caught her before she hit the floor.

"Sweetheart..." The voice was deep, laced with panic and relief.

Her lashes fluttered, barely recognizing his face before darkness claimed her.

Rescue

Vansh carried her through the dimly lit corridors, bridal style, his grip firm yet trembling. Outside, the waiting car roared to life.

As Zayan opened the door, Vansh barked, "Call the doctor. Now."

In the backseat, he brushed a damp strand of hair from her face, his bruised knuckles ghosting her skin. "Why are you doing this to yourself, sweetheart?" he murmured, the words meant for her ears alone.

She didn't stir.

Back at the Mansion

Vivara awoke the next morning in her room, the soft scent of antiseptic in the air and an IV drip at her side. Her body felt weak, but her mind—her mind was chaos.

She had run for three days, and still, she couldn't run far enough.

And for the first time, she wondered—*was the cage she hated also the only place she was safe?*

Sixteen

Ashes Between Us



The morning sunlight filtered weakly through the grand windows, spilling gold across the marble floors of the Luthra mansion.

Vivara sat on the edge of her bed, still feeling the aftereffects of her collapse. Her body ached, but her mind was heavier—haunted by fragments of the last few days: Mahira’s announcement, her own reckless words, and Vansh’s bleeding knuckles as he carried her home.

She had barely stepped out of her room when muted voices caught her attention. The hushed tones floated down the corridor, pulling her toward Vansh’s study like a moth to a flame.

Inside Vansh’s Study

Zayan stood stiffly before Vansh’s desk, a folder in hand.

“It’s confirmed, boss. The car accident last night... it was her father. No survivors.”

Beneath His Bloody Love

Vansh's jaw clenched, a muscle ticking in his cheek. "And she doesn't know?"

"No, sir. Should I inform her?"

His ocean-blue eyes darkened. "No. Not yet. She stormed out that night because of me. The last thing she needs is to think my hands were behind it."

Zayan hesitated. "Boss... the marriage? Should she know why you rushed it?"

Vansh's gaze hardened. "She doesn't need that pain right now. She's lost enough. Keep this buried, Zayan. I won't have her carrying that weight."

For a moment, the room was silent except for the ticking of the antique clock. Then Vansh added, his voice quieter but edged with steel:

"She'll never know it happened the day she walked away from me."

Vivara's Perspective

Vivara staggered back, her heart pounding.

The day I stormed out... father died?

Her world tilted. She had cursed Vansh, screamed her hatred, while her father—despite all his cruelty, despite the pain he'd caused her—had taken his last breath.

A hollow ache spread through her chest. She should have felt relief, freedom from the man who tormented her, but all she felt was loss.

And Vansh... he had known. He had shielded her from the truth and carried her anger in silence.

Then the pieces fell into place. *The next day, he announced our marriage.* She had believed it was just another act of control, another way to cage her life. Now she saw the truth: he had waited until her last tie to the man who had broken her was

gone.

Confrontation

That night, she gathered the courage to face him. The study door creaked as she stepped in, her heart hammering.

Vansh stood by the window, his black shirt rolled at the sleeves, bruised knuckles catching the soft light. His gaze shifted to her. "You couldn't sleep?"

"No," she whispered, stepping closer. "We need to talk."

"About what, sweetheart?"

The word stabbed at her, flooding her chest with confusion. "Stop calling me that," she said, but it lacked conviction.

His gaze softened, but his voice stayed steady. "You're trembling. Did something happen?"

Her throat tightened. "Why do you keep doing this for me? Protecting me... even when I hurt you?"

A shadow crossed his ocean-blue eyes. "Because your pain is mine, Vivara. Even when you think you hate me."

She swallowed hard. "Is that why you... married me? Because he was gone?"

Vansh's jaw flexed. "I married you because you needed someone to stand between you and the world that kept breaking you. I chose to be that wall."

Her breath hitched, the fight between heart and mind leaving her adrift. She turned away, unable to meet his gaze any longer.

Without another word, she left the room, the door closing softly behind her.

That night, Vivara lay awake, her mind spiraling. Her heart mourned her father, her thoughts reeled from Vansh's truth, and somewhere deep inside, a dangerous question whispered:

Had he been her captor all along... or had he been her savior?

Seventeen

Strings of Doubt



The rain had returned to Mumbai, streaking the city with silver threads that blurred neon lights and muffled the chaos below.

Vivara sat at her desk in The Luthra Group, her fingers idle on the keyboard. Sleep hadn't come the night before; every time she closed her eyes, Vansh's words echoed in her mind:

"Because your pain is mine, Vivara. Even when you think you hate me."

Her heart betrayed her, aching for something her mind refused to name.

Mahira's Move

The sharp click of heels broke her reverie. Mahira stood by her desk, a carefully curated smile on her lips.

"Oh, didn't you hear?" she purred, holding up her phone. "Shivansh and I have a dinner date tonight. A private one. His grandmother insisted—just the two of us. She's very eager

about our engagement announcement next week.”

Vivara kept her gaze on her screen, fingers tightening into fists beneath the table.

“I’m sure you’ll make a perfect couple,” she said evenly, though the words tasted bitter.

Mahira tilted her head, feigning innocence. “You don’t look convinced. Oh well—some people just aren’t meant to belong in our world.” She turned and walked away, the scent of expensive perfume lingering like poison.

Vivara’s Spiral

By the end of the day, Vivara had done nothing but stare at her screen. She worked overtime again, delaying the inevitable return to the Luthra mansion.

In the privacy of the empty office, she pressed her forehead against the cool glass of the window.

Why does it hurt? I should hate him. I do hate him... don’t I?

Yet when she remembered Vansh’s bruised hands and the weight of his stare, her heart ached in ways she couldn’t explain.

Rudra Observes

From the doorway, Rudraksh Luthra watched her in silence. She hadn’t noticed him, lost in her thoughts, the city lights casting her in fragile hues.

She’s breaking, Rudra realized. And behind that, the unspoken truth: And my brother’s breaking with her.

Later, in his car, Rudra made a call.

“Keep an eye on her. Quietly. Don’t let Mahira’s people near her,” he ordered one of his men.

Because something about this tangled mess told him Vivara’s life was more in danger than she knew.

Back at the Mansion

Vivara returned well past midnight, tiptoeing through the

darkened halls. She wanted nothing more than to disappear into her room, away from Vansh, away from questions she wasn't ready to face.

But she felt it—the weight of his gaze from the upper landing.

“Vivara,” his voice came, quiet but inescapable.

She froze. Slowly, she turned to meet those ocean-blue eyes, the same ones that had haunted her every thought.

“Why are you avoiding me?” he asked.

Her heart twisted, and before she could stop herself, the words spilled out, sharp as glass.

“Didn’t you enjoy your dinner date with your fiancée? And your engagement? Then why pretend you care about me?”

Vansh’s lips parted, but the answer never came.

Before he could speak, Vivara turned and walked away, her back stiff, her chest hollow.

He watched her go, his jaw tightening, the unspoken truth pressing against his chest.

If only she knew the truth about tonight...

Because the next evening, Mahira had arranged a public dinner with him—an obligation he couldn’t refuse, not without endangering Vivara further.

Eighteen

Beneath His Bloody Love



The grand ballroom of the Oberoi Palace was a world of gold and crystal, chandeliers scattering fractured light across hundreds of eager faces. The air buzzed with anticipation—Mumbai’s elite had gathered for one reason: the engagement of Shivansh Luthra to Mahira Singhania.

Every eye was fixed on the couple-to-be. Every whisper circled the power this union promised.

And yet, in a quiet corner, Vivara stood frozen. The black-and-crimson anarkali she wore clung to her trembling frame, her pale fingers digging crescent moons into the silk. She had told herself she wouldn’t feel anything. She had lied.

Each polite smile Vansh offered Mahira was a blade twisting deeper. Each nod of his head, an unspoken admission that he belonged to another world, a world that had no place for her.

Why can't I stop this? Why does my heart keep betraying me?

Mahira’s Venom

Mahira drifted toward her, every inch the picture of poised triumph, her crimson gown sweeping like spilled wine. She leaned close, her perfume cloying.

"You should get used to this view," Mahira whispered, her smile sharp. "Your place is in the shadows, watching him love someone who actually deserves him."

Vivara stiffened but said nothing. Mahira's laughter, soft and poisonous, lingered in her ears as she turned away.

Vansh's Breaking Point

From across the room, Vansh saw it—the storm brewing behind Vivara's eyes, the silent fracture of her heart. It hit him like a punch, suffocating in its weight. He had caged her, kept her close, and yet she believed she was alone.

And as Mahira's grandmother raised her glass to announce the engagement, Vansh's decision crystallized.

Enough.

The Declaration

"There won't be an engagement," Vansh said, his voice cutting through the music and chatter like a blade.

The ballroom fell silent, gasps rippling through the crowd.

Mahira turned sharply, her smile faltering. "What... what are you saying?"

Vansh stepped forward, his ocean-blue eyes unflinching. "Because I'm already married. To Vivara."

The words echoed, each syllable detonating in the stunned hush.

At the far end of the hall, Rudraksh moved closer, his quiet presence reinforcing the truth.

Shattered Illusions

Mahira's face twisted, rage bleeding through her perfect composure. "You're lying!" she hissed. "You can't do this to

me!”

Her grandmother tried to interject, but Mahira was already reaching into her clutch. Steel glinted in the light.

“IF I CAN’T HAVE YOU—SHE WON’T EITHER!”

The Stab

The crowd gasped as Mahira lunged, knife arcing toward Vivara’s chest.

Time slowed.

Vivara barely had time to flinch before a familiar warmth enveloped her. Vansh’s body slammed into hers, the world reduced to his weight and the sharp, sickening sound of metal tearing flesh.

The knife found its mark—not her, but him.

A crimson bloom spread across Vansh’s black kurta, stark and terrible.

In Her Arms

“VANSI!” Her scream tore through the hall, raw and unrestrained.

He collapsed, and she caught him, sinking to the marble floor. Blood seeped hot and relentless between her fingers as she pressed against the wound.

“No, no, no... wake up, please!” Her tears fell like glass beads, her vision blurring with panic. “Vansh, don’t do this to me!”

He managed a faint smile, his ocean-blue eyes locked on her tear-streaked face. “At last... you called me Vansh... and there’s feeling in your voice. Now I can... die peacefully.”

“DON’T say that!” she cried, her voice breaking as she shook her head. “Don’t you dare talk like that! You’re not leaving me... not like this... be with me, Vansh... please...”

Her tears mingled with his blood, falling in scarlet rivers onto her crimson dupatta.

Beneath His Bloody Love

A War of Love and Fate

Chaos erupted around them—bodyguards restraining Mahira, Rudraksh barking orders, guests scattering in fear.

But in Vivara's world, there was only Vansh—the man who had built walls around her, caged her, and yet, when it mattered, chose her life over his own.

Was this what it meant to be beneath his bloody love?

To be so bound by another's devotion that he would rather bleed than let her fall?

Nineteen

When Fears Turns to Truth



Sirens wailed through the Mumbai night, slicing through the heavy silence of Vivara's mind.

Her hands, sticky with Vansh's blood, wouldn't stop shaking. No matter how tightly she pressed them together, the warmth wouldn't fade. She sat in the ambulance, his head resting against her shoulder, the faint rise and fall of his chest the only thing keeping her sane.

"Hold on, Vansh... please," she whispered, her voice breaking. "You can't leave me. Not now... not when I finally—"

Her words choked, swallowed by sobs.

The paramedic barked something about blood pressure, oxygen, and transfusions, but none of it registered. All Vivara could hear was the echo of his last words:

"At last... you called me Vansh..."

Hospital Chaos

The ambulance screeched to a halt at Mumbai General's

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private wing. Security swarmed, clearing the path as Vansh was rushed inside. Rudraksh stayed close, his face pale but composed, firing off instructions to doctors, guards, and Zayan.

Vivara stumbled after them, her knees threatening to give out. Every step felt like walking through quicksand.

“Ma’am, you can’t go in there,” a nurse said, blocking her from the operating theater.

“But... he needs me!”

“Please, ma’am, we’ll do everything we can. Let us work.”

The door closed, and Vivara was left staring at her own trembling reflection in the glass.

The Waiting

Hours stretched into eternities. Every time the doors swung open, her heart stopped, expecting the worst.

Finally, Rudraksh appeared, his usually impassive face softer now.

“They’ve stabilized him. The knife missed anything vital... but it was close. He lost a lot of blood.”

Vivara’s knees gave way, relief crashing through her so violently that tears spilled unchecked.

“Can I... can I see him?”

Rudraksh hesitated, then nodded. “Just for a minute. He’s still weak.”

By His Side

The room was dim, monitors beeping steadily. Vansh lay against crisp white sheets, the strength that always surrounded him replaced by fragility.

Vivara approached slowly, her chest tightening at the sight of him—bandages wrapped across his torso, his dusky skin pale against the harsh hospital lights.

She sank into the chair beside him, reaching out with trem-

When Fears Turns to Truth

bling fingers to take his hand.

“Why...” Her voice cracked. “Why would you do that? You could have died... all because of me.”

His eyelids fluttered, the ghost of a smile tugging at his lips. “Worth it... if you’re safe... sweetheart.”

Fresh tears welled in her eyes, her heart twisting painfully.

“I thought I hated you,” she whispered, her thumb brushing over his knuckles. “But the thought of losing you... it feels like I can’t breathe.”

For a fleeting moment, his eyes opened wider, the ocean-blue depths glinting with something unspoken.

“Then don’t lose me,” he murmured, before sleep claimed him again.

Realization

As Vivara sat there, watching the steady rise and fall of his chest, a truth she had been fighting for so long settled in her heart.

It wasn’t hatred that burned in her veins.

It was fear—fear of loving him and losing him.

But tonight, beneath the sterile hospital lights, she couldn’t deny it anymore.

She loved Vansh.

And it terrified her more than anything else ever had.

Twenty

Beneath the Storm



The steady beeping of the monitors filled the hospital room, a rhythmic reminder that Vansh was still breathing. Vivara sat close, her trembling fingers barely brushing his bandaged hand. Every time he groaned in his sleep, her heart twisted painfully, blaming herself for every bruise, every drop of blood he had lost.

How did we get here?

Her eyes burned as the memories of the last few days stabbed through her—Mahira’s engagement announcement, her own cutting words that had driven Vansh to bleed for her, and the revelation she had overheard that shattered her defenses.

A soft knock at the door pulled her from the spiral. Rudraksh entered, followed by Rohan and Zayan. Their faces carried the weight of something heavy—something she wasn’t sure she was ready to bear.

“Vivara,” Rudra began gently, “there’s something you need to

know. Something Vansh wanted to tell you... when the time was right."

Her fingers curled tightly in the hospital sheet. "What do you mean?"

Rohan's sigh was deep, as if dragging out a truth buried for too long. "Three years ago, in Lonavala... there was a storm. Vansh was ambushed by rivals. They drugged him, stabbed him in the back, and shot him in the arm. He was barely alive when they threw him by the roadside like trash."

Vivara's breath caught. "Three... years ago?"

Zayan's voice hardened, each word clipped with fury. "More than thirty people passed by. Not one stopped. They saw a dying man and turned away."

Rudra's tone softened. "But then... you came."

Vivara froze, her heart stuttering.

"You were walking home that night," Rohan continued. "You didn't hesitate. You fought off the bystanders trying to take photos, made it breaking news, and got him into an ambulance."

Fragments of memory stabbed through the fog. "I... I signed the admission papers..."

"As his wife," Rudra confirmed with a quiet nod. "The hospital wouldn't treat him without police clearance. You begged them, argued until they agreed. You saved him, Vivara. And when he finally regained consciousness... you were gone."

Her tears came unbidden, slipping down her cheeks. That's why... he's been searching for me all this time...

"He's been looking for you ever since," Zayan added. "CCTV footage, investigators... every lead, every shadow. And then that night, under the Mumbai rain... he found you again. He knew it was fate."

Vivara buried her face in her hands, sobs breaking free. All

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this time... and I hated him. I pushed him away. I called him a monster... after everything I did for him that night.

Now

Hours later, she still sat by his bedside. Vansh lay unconscious, his face pale against the stark white of the hospital pillows. Every rise and fall of his chest was a relief, every flicker of pain across his features another knife through her.

The door burst open, and his family filled the room.

"This is her?" his aunt snapped, disdain lacing her words. "The reason Vansh is fighting for his life?"

Vivara flinched but said nothing, her nails digging into her palm.

"Enough," Rudra cut sharply, his protective glare freezing the air. "She doesn't leave."

The disapproval crackled, broken only when Vansh's mother stepped forward. Her voice, soft yet firm, anchored the storm.

"We know what she did for our son. We owe her more than we can ever repay."

Vivara's chest tightened. Someone... stood up for me?

When He Woke

As dawn painted the sky in muted gold, Vansh stirred. A groan escaped him, and Vivara's heart leapt. She leaned close, barely breathing.

"...Sweetheart..."

The single word, rasped in pain, undid her completely. Tears blurred her vision. "Don't you dare scare me like that again," she whispered, her voice breaking.

His ocean-blue eyes opened, hazy but searching, locking on her. "Still here... because of you."

When his grandmother objected, Vansh, though weak, made his voice iron. "She stays. She's my wife. That's not up for

debate.”

Vivara’s fingers trembled where they clasped his. She wanted to tell him everything—that she remembered, that she knew the truth—but stopped herself. He didn’t yet know she had uncovered their past, or the relentless search that had consumed him for three long years.

For now, she stayed.

Her walls, so carefully built, crumbled under the weight of truth. And though the storm outside had passed, the tempest inside them was only beginning.

Twenty-One

Beneath the Edge



Vansh's recovery was swift, a testament to his iron will. The bruises faded, the stitches held, and soon, the mafia king was walking the corridors of his mansion again, his body healed but his mind restless. Through every sleepless night, Vivara had been there—adjusting his pillows, pressing a cool cloth to his fevered brow, whispering reassurances he wasn't sure she meant.

And then, one morning, she was gone.

No one saw her leave.

No hurried footsteps. No cab idling at the gate.

Just a folded note left on his nightstand, her handwriting trembling across the page:

I'm sorry. You deserve a life untouched by my shadow. I've been nothing but your misfortune. Please don't look for me... I'm not worth it.

—Vivara

Vansh stood frozen, the words like ice in his veins. For the first time in years, the untouchable Shivansh Luthra felt something close to fear.

The Confrontation

He stormed into the living room where Rudra and Zayan were in tense conversation. "Where is she?" Vansh's voice was low, deadly.

Rudra glanced at the note in his hand and paled. "You... haven't read it?"

Vansh's gaze sharpened. "What did you tell her?"

Zayan hesitated, guilt etched across his face. "We told her the truth. About LonaVala. About what she did for you that night... We didn't think she'd—"

"Didn't think?" Vansh's roar cracked like a whip. "She thinks she's my curse because of you! She blames herself for everything I've suffered!"

He turned to Rudra, desperation breaking through his fury. "Find her. Now."

Vivara's Descent

Meanwhile, Vivara stood on the edge of an abandoned pier, wind whipping her hair into her tear-streaked face. The world blurred around her, reduced to the ache in her chest and the echo of Vansh's voice—*Sweetheart...*

She squeezed her eyes shut, whispering into the void, "I love you, Vansh. More than my own life... That's why I can't stay. You deserve the world... not me."

Her toes curled over the ledge.

A strong arm yanked her back.

The Rescue

Vansh's hold on her was fierce, his breath ragged as he dragged her against his chest. "Are you out of your mind?" he roared, his

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voice cracking with something rawer than anger. "You think you can just leave me like this? That I'd ever let you go?"

Tears streamed down her face. "You don't understand... I bring nothing but pain. I'm your bad luck, Vansh!"

He gripped her shoulders, forcing her to meet his blazing ocean-blue eyes. "No. You're the only reason I'm still breathing. Don't you dare call yourself a curse. You're my life, Vivara. I love you—do you hear me? I love you, sweetheart."

Her sob broke into a shuddering gasp as he crushed her against him. "Promise me," he whispered into her hair, his voice trembling, "never—never try something this stupid again."

She nodded, the words barely audible. "I promise..."

Aftermath

Back at the mansion, Vansh refused to let her out of his sight, his grip on her hand unyielding. For the first time since the storm that had brought them together, Vivara allowed herself to believe that maybe she wasn't his burden. Maybe... she was his home.

When his parents learned of what had happened, their verdict was swift:

"Both of you need to leave this house," his mother said firmly, her gaze lingering on Vivara's pale, tear-streaked face. "Not forever—just for yourselves. Go somewhere far from all this... noise. Somewhere you can heal."

And so, a week later, the two of them boarded a flight to the Maldives.

Maldives

For two weeks, the world shrank to sunlit beaches, turquoise waters, and the quiet rediscovery of each other. There were moments of hesitant laughter, shared silences under starlit skies, and the tentative mending of two bruised hearts.

Beneath the Edge

For the first time in what felt like forever, Vivara allowed herself to smile freely—and Vansh, watching her from across the deck, vowed silently that he'd keep that smile safe, whatever it took.

Twenty-Two

Waves of Unspoken Promises



The Maldives greeted them with a gentle lullaby of waves and the soft brush of salty air. For the first time in weeks, Vivara wasn't surrounded by walls—no mansion gates, no looming guards, no shadow of debt or duty. Just endless turquoise stretching into the horizon and Vansh, whose presence still unsettled her in ways she refused to name.

They spent the first few days as polite strangers. Vansh gave her space, never crossing the unspoken line between them. He was softer here, away from Mumbai's chaos—his black suits traded for loose linen shirts, his voice losing that steel edge when he called her “sweetheart.”

And Vivara... she found herself watching him when she thought he wouldn't notice.

The way he laughed with the locals, unguarded.

The quiet moments when he stood at the villa balcony, gazing at the sea as though haunted by something only he could see.

Waves of Unspoken Promises

And the way his ocean-blue eyes always softened when they met hers.

She told herself she still hated him, but her heart whispered otherwise.

One Evening

The sun bled into the horizon, painting the sky in shades of gold and rose. Vivara stood barefoot on the shore, the cool water curling around her ankles. Vansh approached from behind, his footsteps silent in the sand.

"You'll catch a cold, sweetheart," he murmured, draping his jacket over her shoulders.

She stiffened, torn between the instinct to pull away and the warmth that spread through her chest. "You don't have to keep calling me that," she said quietly.

"But I want to," he replied, his voice low, earnest. "Because no matter what happens... you'll always be that to me."

Her breath hitched. The tide pulled at her feet, mirroring the storm in her chest.

For so long, she had fought it—the way her heart skipped when he looked at her, the strange comfort she found in his presence, the way his voice could silence the chaos in her mind. And now, under the bleeding sky, it was too much.

She turned to him, her voice trembling. "Vansh... I'm tired of fighting it."

His brows knit. "Fighting what?"

"You," she whispered. "Or maybe... myself." Her fingers tightened around the fabric of his shirt. "I hate you for forcing me into your world, for caging me... but I hate myself more for falling for you despite it all."

A heavy silence fell between them, broken only by the waves.

"Say it again," he said, his voice rough, as though afraid it was

a dream.

Her eyes glistened. "I love you, Vansh."

For a moment, neither moved. Then he closed the distance, his forehead resting against hers. "Sweetheart... you have no idea how long I've waited to hear that."

The New Beginning

That night, beneath a canopy of stars, they returned to the villa—a sanctuary of glass walls and soft candlelight. Vivara lingered at the balcony, her heart still racing from the confession. Vansh stepped close, the warmth of his presence brushing her back.

"You don't have to be afraid anymore," he whispered, his fingers gently turning her toward him.

For the first time, she didn't pull away. She let him see her—every scar, every tremble, every unspoken fear.

Vansh's touch was patient, reverent, as though she were made of something fragile and precious. He kissed the uncertainty from her lips, his hands never demanding, only offering the safety she had been searching for.

Vivara's walls finally gave way, her hands curling into his shirt as though anchoring herself. With each whisper of his lips, each lingering caress, the distance between them dissolved.

They didn't rush. For them, this was more than desire—it was trust, fragile and blooming, a promise built on the ashes of pain.

Later, tangled in the soft sheets, Vivara rested her head against Vansh's chest, feeling the steady beat of his heart beneath her ear.

"I'm still scared," she admitted softly.

His fingers traced soothing circles along her back. "Then let me hold your fear with you," he murmured. "From now on, you

Waves of Unspoken Promises

don't have to carry it alone."

For the first time in years, Vivara believed him.

And for the first time in forever, she felt free.

Twenty-Three

The Unforeseen Heartbeat



6 weeks had passed since they returned from the Maldives, yet the warmth of those sun-drenched days still lingered in Vivara's heart. Life at the Luthra mansion had settled into a strange rhythm—her mornings filled with quiet walks in the sprawling gardens, her evenings with Vansh's steady presence, his subtle yet unyielding protectiveness.

But lately... something felt different.

She had been unusually tired, her appetite faltering. Small waves of nausea came and went, leaving her restless and weak. At first, Vivara brushed it off—stress, she told herself. Adjusting to her new life, the mansion, to Vansh.

But when her fingers hesitated over the calendar in her vanity drawer, a creeping realization took root.

No... could it be?

The Fainting Spell

It happened on an ordinary afternoon. Vivara had been

The Unforeseen Heartbeat

arranging fresh lilies in the hall when the room suddenly swayed. Her vision blurred, the vase slipped from her hands, shattering on the marble floor.

“Vivara!”

Vansh was there in an instant, catching her before she crumpled. Fear tightened his chest as he lifted her into his arms, her weight frighteningly light against him.

“Sweetheart, what’s wrong?” His voice cracked in a way it rarely did.

“I... I’m fine...” she whispered, trying to steady herself, but her eyelids fluttered helplessly.

“No, you’re not.” His jaw tightened. “Zayan, call the doctor. Now.”

The Revelation

Later, in the privacy of their room, the family doctor delivered her verdict with a soft smile.

“Congratulations, Mr. and Mrs. Luthra. Vivara is expecting. About seven weeks along.”

The words hung in the air, almost surreal.

Vivara’s breath caught. Her gaze dropped to her hands, trembling in her lap. Pregnant. She was carrying Vansh’s child.

For a moment, Vansh stood frozen, every muscle locked in disbelief. Then, slowly, a rare, unguarded smile touched his lips.

“Our baby...” he murmured, almost reverently.

He knelt before her, large hands covering hers. “Vivara... sweetheart... we’re going to be parents.”

A New Kind of Love

From that moment, Vansh changed. The ruthless mafia king who commanded fear became a man consumed by fierce, unrelenting love. He shadowed her every step—ensuring she

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never lifted anything heavy, hovering whenever she climbed the stairs, his eyes softening each time they lingered on her still-flat belly.

At night, when she drifted to sleep, he would stay awake just to watch her breathe, his hand unconsciously resting over where their child grew.

“You’re not alone,” Vansh whispered fiercely one evening, pulling her into his embrace. “I’ll protect both of you with my life. Always.”

For the first time, Vivara let herself believe him.

Her heart still wrestled with fear and uncertainty, but as Vansh traced soothing circles over her hand and spoke of plans for their future, she couldn’t ignore the fragile warmth blooming inside her—hope.

In that quiet moment, beneath the heavy chandelier light, the man who once caged her felt less like her captor... and more like the anchor she never knew she needed.

Twenty-Four

Shadows over Innocence



The Luthra guest house in Alibaug was meant to be an escape—a sanctuary far from the relentless tension of Mumbai. Nestled against the sea cliffs, it was quiet, surrounded by the rhythmic lull of crashing waves and the soft rustle of palm trees.

For the first time in weeks, Vivara felt the weight on her chest ease. She strolled through the sunlit gardens, one hand instinctively resting over her abdomen. Seven weeks along, and every flutter of unease came with a fierce, protective instinct she never knew she had.

Vansh was different here too—less the feared mafia king, more the man who stayed awake to listen to the ocean with her, his arm wrapped around her shoulders as though she were the only thing tethering him to this world.

“You’re safe here,” he had promised that morning, pressing a kiss to her forehead. “I’ll make sure nothing touches you. Not

now, not ever.”

The Ambush

The first sign of danger came at dusk.

A low rumble shook the air, and then—gunfire. The tranquil silence shattered into chaos. Vansh was on his feet instantly, his ocean-blue eyes turning to steel.

“Vivara, stay inside. Don’t move,” he ordered, his tone sharp but laced with fear.

“Vansh—”

“Sweetheart, please.” He gripped her shoulders, gaze fierce. “For me.”

Before she could respond, the windows exploded inward, shards of glass scattering like deadly rain. Vansh shoved her to the ground, shielding her with his body as a bullet tore into the wall behind them.

Zayan and Rohan stormed in, guns drawn.

“Boss, it’s the Varkhanis. They found us.”

Vansh’s face hardened. “Get Vivara to the safe room. Now.”

A Heartbeat Amidst Fire

Even as Rohan led her down the corridor, Vivara’s mind spun with terror. Each gunshot that cracked the air felt like it tore through her. She pressed a trembling hand against her stomach.

A final war. His enemies came for him. She hid in a safe house, clutching her belly, praying.

Vansh stayed behind, a ruthless storm in human form. His black kurta was soon flecked with crimson—some his own, most not. Every enemy that crossed the threshold fell to his merciless aim, but his mind wasn’t on the war. It was on her.

In the safe house, Vivara fell to her knees, her whispered plea breaking the silence:

“Please... bring him back to me. Please, just this once.”

When the Dust Settled

Hours later, silence returned, broken only by the sound of waves and the distant wail of sirens. The door swung open to reveal Vansh, bruised and bloodied, but alive. His chest heaved with the effort of keeping his composure as his gaze found her.

“Vansh...” Her voice cracked, tears spilling freely.

He crossed the room in three long strides and pulled her into his arms, holding her as if he’d never let go.

“You’re safe. Both of you,” he whispered against her hair, his voice trembling for the first time in years.

She pulled back enough to take in the sight of him—clothes torn, skin streaked with drying blood.

“You’re hurt—”

“I don’t care,” he cut her off, pressing his forehead to hers. “As long as you’re breathing, nothing else matters.”

He collapsed into her embrace, and for a long moment, they simply held on. She clung to him, feeling the trembling in his body that belied his victory.

He came back drenched in blood—victorious.

A Silent Vow

Later, as he lay with her in the dimly lit room, Vansh’s hand rested protectively over her stomach.

“I failed once tonight,” he murmured, staring at the ceiling. “I’ll never let it happen again. They’ll pay for even daring to come near you.”

Vivara, still shaken, turned to face him. There was something in his eyes—a mix of fury and desperate tenderness—that made her heart ache.

For the first time, she didn’t fight the urge to hold him closer.

Twenty-Five

Her Pain, His Panic



Three weeks had passed since the bloody night at the Alibaug guest house, but the echoes of gunfire still lingered in Vansh's mind.

The Luthra mansion had transformed into a fortress—three times the usual security, every corridor watched, every car in the convoy checked twice. Even so, Vansh could not silence the gnawing dread in his chest.

Because Vivara was struggling.

Fragile Days

Pregnancy wasn't the glowing picture of bliss he had imagined.

She was exhausted all the time, her delicate frame now carrying the weight of a growing life. Morning sickness turned into all-day sickness; even the scent of his cologne made her gag. Some nights, she curled up on the bed, tears slipping silently down her cheeks as cramps twisted her insides.

"Sweetheart..." Vansh whispered one evening, kneeling beside her, his ocean-blue eyes shadowed with helplessness. "Tell me what I can do."

"You can't," she whispered back, burying her face against his shoulder. "I just... I hate feeling so weak."

He gathered her into his arms, rocking her gently. "You're not weak. You're carrying our world."

His overprotective instincts sharpened with every passing day. He hovered during doctor visits, memorizing every instruction. He banned her from going anywhere without an escort, installed biometric locks, and even replaced the mansion's flooring after she tripped once on a loose tile.

To everyone else, Shivansh Luthra was still the untouchable mafia king. To Vivara, he was a man unraveling at the seams, panic hidden behind every controlled breath.

The Storm Breaks

It happened on a monsoon night, thunder rolling over Mumbai like distant drums of war. Vivara was in the nursery, folding tiny clothes, when a sharp pain gripped her. She gasped, clutching the crib for support.

"Vansh!" she called out, breathless.

He was at her side in seconds, his phone and all pretense of calm dropping as he scooped her up.

"Zayan! Get the car!" His voice was a whip-crack of command, but his arms trembled as he held her.

Every second of the drive stretched into eternity. Vivara's breaths came in ragged gasps, her nails digging into his hand.

"Breathe with me, sweetheart. Please, just hold on," Vansh pleaded, his composure splintering.

The Longest Hours

The hospital corridors blurred into white noise. Vansh paced

like a caged predator, his black shirt damp with sweat, hands stained faintly with her blood. Every cry from behind the doors tore through him like shrapnel.

"She's in good hands, boss," Rohan reassured, but Vansh didn't hear him.

In those endless hours, the man who had stared death in the eye more times than he could count was reduced to a terrified husband, praying for the safety of the two people who had become his entire world.

The First Cry

And then—silence broke.

A baby's wail pierced the air, raw and beautiful. Vansh stumbled forward, nearly losing his footing as the doctor emerged, smiling.

"Congratulations, Mr. Luthra. It's a girl. Both mother and baby are healthy."

For the first time in years, Vansh's knees threatened to give out. Relief crashed through him so violently it left him breathless.

A New Beginning

When he entered the room, Vivara lay pale but glowing, her arms cradling a tiny bundle wrapped in pink. Tears glimmered in her eyes as she looked up at him.

"Vansh..." she whispered.

He crossed the room slowly, almost reverently, and touched his daughter's impossibly small hand. It closed around his finger, fragile yet fierce.

"She's perfect," he breathed, his voice breaking. "You... you're both perfect, Sweetheart."

Vivara smiled weakly. "Meet our daughter, Vansh."

In that moment, the man who commanded empires bent his

Her Pain, His Panic

head and pressed a trembling kiss to his wife's forehead, his heart full with the weight of two promises:

To protect them. To cherish them. Always.

Twenty-Six

Crowned by His Girls



Eight months had passed since the night that changed everything.

The Luthra mansion, once feared as the cold heart of Mumbai's underworld, now pulsed with a new kind of chaos — soft coos, tiny footsteps, and the sound of the most ruthless mafia king cooing at his baby daughter.

A Name Written in Fire and Love

Vansh had insisted on naming her himself.

"She deserves a name that carries both strength and grace," he had said, holding his daughter for the first time. "A name the world will remember."

And so she became **Vianika Luthra** — his "little queen," his *Chhoti Rani*.

Now, eight months later, Vianika had her father wrapped around her smallest finger.

The Softest Side of the Storm

Vansh, the man whose name sent enemies fleeing, now paced the marble hallways at 3 a.m., barefoot, singing lullabies in a voice no one dared tease. Board meetings paused because Vianika had crawled into his lap, tugging at his silver chain. Guns were set aside when her laughter filled the room.

Vivara would often lean against the nursery doorframe, warmth blooming in her chest. Every day, Vansh seemed to fall deeper into this newfound life. To the world, he was still Shivansh Luthra — feared, untouchable. But to her and Vianika, he was simply Vansh: protector, provider, and hopelessly devoted father.

Shadows Outside, Light Within

But the world they lived in wasn't one that allowed softness for long.

One evening, as Vivara played with Vianika in the nursery, distant gunfire cracked through the mansion's grounds. Vivara froze, clutching her daughter.

Moments later, Vansh stormed in, shirt flecked with blood — not his own. He met Vivara's terrified gaze and gently pried Vianika from her arms.

"You're safe," he whispered, kissing their daughter's forehead. "Both of you are safe. I promised I'd protect my girls... and I will."

A Throne for a Princess

The mansion had become a fortress, its every corner ruled by the whims of an eight-month-old princess. Enemies trembled at the gates, yet inside, Vianika giggled, waving her tiny fists like a queen commanding her empire.

Zayan once joked, "Boss, the Luthra empire's being run by a baby princess now."

Vansh only smiled, his gaze soft as he watched Vianika tug at

Vivara's dupatta.

"Then let them know," he murmured, "I'd burn the whole world for my girls."

His Truest Victory

Vivara stepped closer, brushing her hand against his. "She's got you wrapped around her finger already," she teased softly.

Vansh turned to her, a quiet promise deep in his ocean-blue eyes. "Both of you do."

For the first time in years, the shadows of his empire felt distant. The man who once ruled through fear now lived for morning giggles and quiet nights where his family slept safe in his arms.

He would never forget what it cost to get here — the wars fought, the scars borne. But as he held Vivara close and kissed Vianika's tiny head, Vansh knew one thing with absolute certainty:

He had finally won his greatest war —

not against his enemies,

but against the man he used to be.

And in that victory, he found his true crown:

Vianika Luthra and Vivara Shivansh Luthra — his two girls, his forever.

That night, rain began to fall, soft and steady against the glass windows. Vansh dimmed the lights until the room glowed like a cocoon.

Vivara shifted Vianika between them, the three of them wrapped in one blanket as they gazed at the darkened sky. The storm outside no longer felt threatening.

Danger still lurked beyond the mansion walls. Shadows still whispered of unfinished wars.

But inside this mansion, love had won.

Crowned by His Girls

And as the rain fell softly outside, the three of them — Vansh, Vivara, and baby Vianika — cuddled beneath the vast night sky, their breaths syncing in a quiet lullaby.

Forever beneath his bloody love.

